

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 09514 011615Z
ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 9514

EXDIS

LONDON EYES ONLY AMBASSADOR TOON

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SOPN, UR, US
SUBJECT: SOVIET STATEMENT ON POSSIBLE US-SOVIET SUMMIT

1. TASS STATEMENT OF JUNE 30 ON POSSIBLE MEETING BETWEEN
PRESIDENTS CARTER AND BREZHNEV, WHICH WAS CARRIED ON WIRE
SERVICES SAME DAY, APPEARED IN PRAVDA JULY 1 IN FULL BUT
WITHOUT ADDITIONAL COMMENTARY.

2. TASS STATEMENT IS CLEAR EFFORT TO ESTABLISH SOVIET
PUBLIC POSITION THAT DISCUSSION OF MEETING WAS AT U.S.
INITIATIVE AND THAT QUESTION OF MEETING HAS NOT YET BEEN
DECIDED. IF OUR MEMORY SERVES, AN ANNOUNCEMENT OF THIS NATURE IS
UNPRECEDENTED IN RECENT YEARS, AND WITHOUT BEING PRIVY TO
EXCHANGES WHICH OCCURRED IN WASHINGTON, IT IS DIFFICULT TO SPEAK
WITH CONFIDENCE ABOUT THE CONSIDERATIONS WHICH MAY HAVE PROMPTED
IT. IF THE FACT AND THRUST OF WASHINGTON COMMENTARY WAS NOT
CLEARED IN ADVANCE WITH SOVIETS, SOVIET REACTION MAY STEM FROM
LITTLE MORE THAN PIQUE AT NOT HAVING BEEN CONSULTED IN
ADVANCE REGARDING PUBLIC TREATMENT OF QUESTION. IF, ON OTHER
HAND, DOBRYNIN INDICATED CONCURRENCE IN THRUST OF OUR COMMENTS,
THEN TASS ANNOUNCEMENT MAY REFLECT DEEPER PROBLEMS SUCH AS THE SUDDEN
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SURFACING OF OPPOSITION WITHIN THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP TO A SUMMIT
MEETING BEFORE SALT II IS COMPLETED OR NEAR COMPLETION.

3. WHILE THE TASS ANNOUNCEMENT CERTAINLY IMPLIES THAT THE CURRENT
SOVIET ATTITUDE TOWARD AN EARLY MEETING IS LESS THAN ENTHUSIASTIC,
IT BY NO MEANS CLOSES THE DOOR TO THE IDEA. BUT IT DOES CARRY
THE IMPLICATION - COUBTLESS INTENTIONAL - THAT SOME U.S.

CONCESSIONS, EITHER REAL OR APPARENT, MAY BE NECESSARY
BEFORE A MEETING CAN BE SCHEDULED.

4. ON JUNE 29, DAY BEFORE TASS ANNOUNCEMENT, MIDDLEBURY
COLLEGE PRESIDENT OLIN ROBISON, WHO IS VISITING MOSCOW, HAD
LONG DISCUSSION WITH USA INSTITUTE DIRECTOR ARBATOV, DURING WHICH
ARBATOV EXPRESSED PERSONAL VIEW THAT SUMMIT UNLIKELY WITHOUT A
SALT AGREEMENT, OR SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS TOWARD ONE.
ARBATOV'S REASONING WAS THAT 1973 TRIP TO US IS A HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL
EVENT IN BREZHNEV'S MEMORY, AND ARBATOV DOUBTED THAT BREZHNEV
WOULD WISH TO RISK LESS "SUCCESSFUL" VISIT TO US AT THIS STAGE IN
HIS CAREER. MATLOCK

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